

194

CUBAN INDEPENDENCE.

SPEECH

OF

HON. WILLIAM J. PURMAN,
OF FLORIDA,

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

25 10 2

JUNE 19, 1874.



WASHINGTON:
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.
1874.

49

F1785

.P98



125630

Cal, 2 & Feb, 12

SPEECH
OF
HON. WILLIAM J. PURMAN.

The House having under consideration the following joint resolution (H. R. No. 90) for the recognition of the independence of Cuba:

Whereas it is the clear and undoubted right of any American colony to sever its connection with the mother colony and establish itself as an independent nation whenever the good of its people requires it; and whereas the people of Cuba have declared themselves free and independent of the government of Spain, have established a government for themselves and abolished negro slavery, and for more than five years have successfully resisted all the efforts of Spain to reduce them to submission and re-establish the condition of negro slavery in that island; and whereas the war between Spain and Cuba has been and is now being conducted with a degree of barbarity shocking to all Christendom, and there is no reasonable prospect that Spain will ever be able to re-establish dominion over the people of Cuba; and whereas, in consequence of the proximity of the seat of war to the United States, the war has been and is injurious to the interests of the people of the United States, and it is evident that a prolongation of the contest will result only in great suffering and bloodshed, to be followed by the ultimate recognition of the independence of Cuba by Spain herself: Therefore,

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That it has become the duty of the United States to recognize Cuba as one of the independent nations of the earth.

SEC. 2. That the United States will observe strict neutrality between the contending parties during the further prosecution of the war, and will accord to each of them belligerent rights and equal privileges and advantages in all ports and places within the United States—

Mr. PURMAN said:

Mr. SPEAKER: The first cry of freedom in Cuba, though in a different language from ours, sobbing across the narrow Gulf Stream, received a ready response and re-echo in the chivalric hearts of Florida. Florida, once a sister with Cuba in the family of the once great Spanish nation, cannot be oblivious to the struggling condition of her less fortunate relation. The blood of a historical consanguinity yet courses through the veins and memory of our people.

It was the good fortune of our State to have been first plucked from the grasp of Spanish dominion by the reckless gallantry of a cavalier general and in violation of all international law, and the jewel of American liberty was set upon her brow in the similitude of a captive beauty crowned by her conquering and conquered knight. She escaped the penalty of a bloody revolution paid by all her other sisters as the price of their liberty and independence.

Severed so early by a most happy fate from the mother family and blessed like a beautiful damsel of poor estate wedded by a mighty king, she has not grown selfish in her happiness nor haughty in her superior station, but like a true sister comes to the rescue with all the power of tears and prayers—tears to beseech propitiation from Heaven, and prayers to beseech mercy and recognition from this United States Congress.

In the session of 1870 the Legislature of our State spoke as follows by the adoption of the resolution introduced by myself :

Resolved by the people of the State of Florida, represented in senate and assembly, That we are not and cannot be indifferent to the eventful history which our neighbors are enacting on the Island of Cuba in their patriotic endeavors for freedom and independence. That by our proximity of country, by the comity that has always so happily prevailed between our respective people, by our own love of liberty, and by the promptings of our own political religion, that all nations should be free and enjoy the blessings of popular institutions, we extend our heartfelt sympathies and hopes to the struggling patriots of Cuba, and with them unite our invocations for their speedy deliverance from oppression and their victorious establishment of a free government, which is the only rightful authority on earth to which universal man should acknowledge obedience; and that our expressions of fellowship in feeling and prayer may carry with them at least the power of a moral support and encouragement, we hereby request our Representatives and Senators in the Congress of the United States to respond to the strong popular sentiment of the whole country, and at once accord by the sovereign voice of Congress those belligerent rights and protection to the cause of free Cuba which a common justice, kindred principles, and an enlightened humanity demand, and which are sanctioned by the usage and laws of nations.

Again, in the session of 1874, upon the resolution introduced by Senator Howe, of Key West :

Whereas the people of the Island of Cuba have been and are still struggling for their national existence and are trying to establish a free government for themselves and their children; and whereas the war waged by the Spanish government has no parallel for its inhumanity in modern times, and should not be permitted by any civilized nation: Therefore,

Be it resolved by the people of the State of Florida, represented in senate and assembly, That the Congress of the United States is requested to adopt such legislation as may be necessary to enable the national Government to extend such aid to the people of Cuba as becomes a great republic, whose people so ardently sympathize with an oppressed nation.

And be it further resolved, That our Senators and Representatives in Congress are requested to present these resolutions to their respective bodies as expressive of the sense of the people of Florida.

Again, through the voice of her chief executive, who sent the following telegram greeting to President Grant upon the apprehension of difficulties arising from the capture of the *Virginius* and the assassination of portion of the crew :

STATE OF FLORIDA,
Executive Office, Tallahassee, Florida, November 20, 1873.

U. S. GRANT,
President of the United States, Washington, D. C.:

In case of serious difficulty with Spanish authorities in Cuba Florida will do its duty; and as we hold the front position geographically, so we will claim the front rank in the cause of national honor and human liberty.

M. L. STEARNS,
Governor.

This tender to the President meant indignation at the insult offered our flag, earnestness for the vindication of its honor; for it was written by a governor with his left hand, having already lost his right arm in defense of his country's flag.

Thus has our State spoken in the most solemn and authorized manner known to our constitution; and were I, from any possibility, to remain silent upon this floor upon this stirring question of a people who are our neighbors by geography, political aspirations, and reciprocal interests, fighting and dying for liberty and independence, I would be recreant to my own convictions of duty and to the most sanguine sentiments of my constituents.

Sir, I give my most cordial support of heart and hand and vote to the resolution of the gentleman from Vermont [Mr. POLAND] for the recognition of the independence of Cuba.

If the principles and facts enunciated in the four propositions of

the preamble to the resolution are correct, then every unbiased mind cannot fail to see in the logical deduction independence, and independence only.

The first proposition is—

It is the clear and undoubted right of any American colony to sever its connection with the mother colony, and establish itself as an independent nation, when ever the good of its people requires it.

Is this proposition as a political principle correct, and sanctioned by the proudest pages in the history of our own country?

The grandest monument to the wisdom and patriotism of our revolutionary sires is the immortal declaration of our own independence as Colonies from the kingdom of Great Britain. They declared life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as the fundamental and inalienable rights of man, having been endowed with these rights not by any ancient parental monarchy or free constitution, but by their own Creator; that only for the purpose of securing these rights were governments instituted among men, and the powers of such governments are alone derived from the expressed will of the majority of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these rights, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it and institute a new government for their better safety and happiness.

Such was the new political doctrine adopted by our colonial fathers in the New World; and after another declaration that the colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent, they mutually pledged to each other their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor for the support of their new doctrine, and the Rubicon was crossed forever.

What degenerate son will deny a single principle baptized in the blood of our own Revolution, or deface a single stone bright with our own glory in this temple of liberty reared for us by our forefathers?

"Whenever the good of its people requires it!" Sir, God and the enlightened world know that the good of the 677,951 white people, and the good of the 605,461 colored people in Cuba, over a quarter of a million of the latter being bound in abject slavery, require as speedily as the pen of fate can write the event the fullest abolishment of the last vestige of Spanish domination over the island.

What nameless oppressions for centuries have been endured by the devoted people of this beautiful island the Christian world never could fully know.

The Spanish tyrant repressed all general education, prevented the free introduction of knowledge among the people, suppressed all societies for the promotion of any useful or popular purpose, and under such a never-ceasing system of suppression the Cuban's history, as apart from the unreliable information furnished by the tyrant himself, remains unwritten, and preserved only in cherished tradition.

From the day the native Indian chief Hatney was burned at the stake, exclaiming with his dying breath, "I prefer hell to heaven if there are Spaniards in heaven," to the hour when the late President Céspedes, discovered by a Spanish detachment in the Sierra Maestra Mountains, fired the contents of his last revolver at them and cast himself headlong over the rocky precipice, preferring a sublime suicide to Spanish capture, this island has been the scene of such tyranny and crimes as to shock all Christendom and cause the very heavens to weep.

Hear but a hasty recital of the wrongs that have crushed generations after generations, and ask yourselves the question whether the American people have no sympathy for these heroic patriots, and

whether our recognition of their independence, not by enthusiastic declamation, but by the passage of this resolution, is not our solemn duty in the interest of an exalted and prophetic patriotism, and in the light of that Christianity which teaches us to love our neighbor as ourself.

Hear the wrongs, hoary with age and to-day dripping with the blood of the oppressor and the oppressed.

The island has been under martial law since 1825.

Cuba is permitted no representation in the Cortes or Congress of Spain.

The natives of the island are excluded entirely from the army, the judiciary, the treasury, and the customs.

The military government assumes the charge of the schools, and the inhabitants are forbidden to send their sons to the United States for educational purposes, and only one child out of eighteen is allowed to be taught to read and write.

The press is under the vilest censorship and newspapers from abroad with few exceptions are contraband, while letters passing through the post are opened and purged of their contents before delivery.

Cubans are deprived of all arms, and are not allowed to carry even a fruit-knife under a penalty of imprisonment for six years, and are fined five pasos (dollars) for carrying canes of a larger size than can be easily introduced into a gun-barrel.

A Cuban must purchase a license before he can invite a few friends to take a cup of tea at his board, and no person can remove from one house to another without first paying for a government permit.

Farmers are compelled to pay 10 per cent. on all their harvests as soon as gathered except sugar, and on that article 2½ per cent.

Upon every species of property sold the sum of 10 per cent. on the purchase price must be paid to the government.

The grazing of cattle is taxed exorbitantly, and no goods either in or out of doors can be sold without a license.

They have no right of trial by jury, no liberty of speech or of the press, and are not permitted to assemble themselves to the number of three without being dispersed.

Stamped paper must be used for all contracts, costing eight dollars per sheet; flour is taxed ten dollars and fifty cents per barrel from the United States and two dollars and fifty cents from Spain, and the rich only can eat flour while the poor eat cassava-root.

The culture of wheat, which grows luxuriantly, is restricted. Bread-stuffs from the United States are excluded or burdened with heavy duties for the benefit of Spanish producers.

Ice is monopolized by the government and fishing on the coast is forbidden, being also a government monopoly.

The captain-general and his stewards levy taxes and contributions at their pleasure, amounting now to more than sixty millions per annum. With this revenue the government keeps an army of fifty thousand Spanish or Peninsula troops on the island, pays a vast number of officials, part of the clergy, half the entire Spanish navy, and many officials of rank at home in the mother country, and the surplus, if any, is remitted to Spain and expended on matters entirely foreign to the interests of the island.

Is it unnatural that a social gulf, deep as an unfathomable abyss in the Alps, has for ages divided the Cuban from the Spaniard? What an Iliad of woes in this richest territory on the face of the globe—a paradise by nature made a hell by the Spaniard. Was ever the oppression of the American colonies by the British government equalled

by one hundredth of the oppression inflicted for centuries upon the unfortunate colony of Cuba? The forms at least of civil government prevailed in our Colonies, and the protection of life and property were at least asserted in the equal laws of Parliament. In Cuba the only government is a military despotism, where the fate of all life and property ever hangs in the uncertain balance of an arbitrary will and from whose decree there is no earthly appeal. Upon remonstrance the British Parliament alleviated the taxation of our Colonies until the duty on tea alone remained the most obnoxious imposition. In Cuba everything is taxed, without precedent or propriety, and the burden of the imposition is only graduated by the ability of the subject to pay the extortion, with no cortes or parliament to appeal to for even temporary justice or alleviation.

The principle that taxation and representation are inseparable in any just government impelled our fathers into a revolution by formal declaration on the 4th of July, 1776. Impelled by the same conviction that taxation and representation are inseparable, and goaded by the iron of tyranny piercing their flesh at every turn, the patriots of Cuba declared their independence from the thralldom of Spain on the 10th of October, 1868, at Manzanillo, and submitted to the God of their conscience, and all civilized nations, the asseverations of their patriotic purpose.

Who can declare in the face of this free nation that dates its liberty from the rebellion of its fathers, and without doing violence to the truth of our own history, that the people of Cuba have a less righteous cause for freedom and independence than we had in 1776?

Sir, any change from a military despotism will be for the good of a people so mysteriously cursed in this omnipotent toleration by a common Creator, and the generous American people have for years been convinced that the independence of Cuba will alone secure the universal disenthralment of this island and relieve the United States from a constantly threatening danger of collision with Spain herself.

The second proposition in the preamble is capable of incontrovertible establishment:

The people of Cuba have declared themselves free and independent of the government of Spain, have established a government for themselves and abolished negro slavery, and for more than five years have successfully resisted all the efforts of Spain to reduce them to submission and re-establish the condition of negro slavery in that inland.

The revolutionists, headed by Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, an able lawyer and wealthy planter, raised the standard of revolt on the 10th of October, 1868, and issued their declaration of the justice and determination of their cause.

A few extracts from the memorable instrument I beg the House to hear:

In arming ourselves against the tyrannical government of Spain we must, according to precedent in all civilized countries, proclaim before the world the cause that impels us to take this step, which, though likely to entail considerable disturbances upon the present, will insure the happiness of the future.

It is well known that Spain governs the island of Cuba with an iron and blood-stained hand. The former holds the latter deprived of political, civil, and religious liberty. Hence the unfortunate Cubans being illegally prosecuted and thrown into exile, or executed by military commissions in times of peace; hence their being kept from public meeting, and forbidden to speak or write on affairs of state; hence their remonstrances against the evils that afflict them, being looked upon as the proceedings of rebels, from the fact that they are bound to keep silence and obey; hence the never-ending plague of hungry officials from Spain to devour the product of their industry and labor; hence their exclusion from public stations and want of opportunity to skill themselves in the art of government; hence the restrictions to which public instruction with them is subjected, in order to keep them so ignorant

as not to be able to know and enforce their rights in any shape or form whatever; hence the navy and standing army which are kept upon their country at an enormous expenditure from their own wealth, to make them bend their knees and submit their necks to the iron yoke that disgraces them; hence the grinding taxation under which they labor, and which would make them all perish in misery but for the marvellous fertility of their soil. On the other hand, Cuba cannot prosper as she ought to, because white immigration, that suits her best, is artfully kept from her shores by the Spanish government. And as Spain has many a time promised us, Cubans, to respect our rights, without having hitherto fulfilled her promises, as she continues to tax us heavily, and by so doing is likely to destroy our wealth; as we are in danger of losing our property, our lives, and our honor under further Spanish domination; as we have reached a depth of degradation unutterably revolting to manhood; as great nations have sprung from revolt against a similar disgrace after exhausted pleading for relief; as we despair of justice from Spain through reasoning, and cannot longer live deprived of the rights which other people enjoy, we are constrained to appeal to arms to assert our rights in the battlefield, cherishing the hope that our grievances will be a sufficient excuse for this last resort to redress them and secure our future welfare.

To the God of our conscience and to all civilized nations we submit the sincerity of our purpose. Vengeance does not mislead us, nor is ambition our guide. We only want to be free, and see all men with us equally free, as the Creator intended mankind to be. Our earnest belief is that all men are brethren. Hence our love of toleration, order, and justice in every respect. We desire the gradual abolition of slavery with indemnification; we admire universal suffrage, as it insures the sovereignty of the people; we demand a religious regard for the inalienable rights of man as the basis of freedom and national greatness.

During the first month of the war a provisional government was organized at Bayamo, and on the 10th of April, 1869, a convention met at Guaimaro of the delegates of the different sections of the island, where a constitution was considered and adopted. Their constitution is similar in all essential features to any of the free constitutions of our States, and by article 24 slavery is forever abolished, and all the inhabitants of the republic of Cuba are declared absolutely and forever free.

For more than five years the Cubans have successfully resisted all the power of Spain to reduce them to submission, and more than five hundred and sixty-eight engagements have been fought, many of them it is true of small proportions and inconsiderable damage, while again scores of battles have been fought where from 100 to 800 were left dead upon the field. At the battle of Cubitas 300 Spaniards were killed and 500 wounded, and 160 Cubans killed and wounded. At Guantanamo 1,200 Spaniards and 133 Cubans were killed and wounded. In March, 1874, the Spanish General Arminan was defeated at Guasinias by General Maximo Gomez in such a disastrous manner that he fell back to Puerto Principe with scarcely a single man of his column five thousand strong.

The constitution and laws passed by the house of representatives, notwithstanding all the contrary statements by the enemies of free Cuba, continue to rule as regularly as can be expected from an infant republic whose twofold difficulties simultaneously are the institution of itself and the fighting of its opponents, and the latest information shows that the Cubans hold their own from Santiago de Cuba to the district of Cinco Villas, over more than half the territory of the island. Wherever the patriot soldiers sweep they leave terror and destruction behind them. To the Spaniard's plantation they carry irretrievable devastation, while to their slaves they carry the invitation to freedom which is as instantly embraced, for freedom even in the camp and dangers of the liberators is far dearer than that brutal bondage in which there is no emancipation save in welcome death.

The white and colored soldiers in the patriot army fight side by side for liberty, are not divided off into colored and white regiments,

stand shoulder to shoulder in the same ranks, and in the number of commissioned officers are as many colored as white. One of the bravest and most successful generals in the Cuban army is a colored man, General Policarpo Rustan, called the "Hero of the East."

With 605,461 colored people on the island, 379,523 of them held as slaves, and this battle of freedom raging around them, the very flame and smoke of which offer them their only hope of deliverance, the bloody struggle must inevitably keep on increasing instead of diminishing, and all efforts of Spain to re-establish slavery on the old foundations once destroyed by the patriots must indeed fail, and unspeakable calamities will follow each unsuccessful attempt, until that day, whether immediate or remote, (for time works no interference with the providences of God,) when the shout of liberation shall arise all over the island and the chorus reaching our shores shall go swelling through the South like an army of angels making music with their wings.

The third preamble is so susceptible of direct proof, that I shall content myself with a few references only and extracts from official documents:

The war between Spain and Cuba has been and is now being conducted with a degree of barbarity shocking to all Christendom, and there is no reasonable prospect that Spain will ever be able to re-establish dominion over the people of Cuba.

The history of Spanish rule has ever been one of rapacity and cruelty in all her colonial possessions. Her peace is filled with violence and her wars with barbarity. From the treacherous murder of Incas and Montezuma to the last dastardly assassination of Captain Fry and his companions, her record is one of continual blood and inhumanity. She commenced on one line of policy in 1850 with the wholesale execution of Lopez and Crittenden and their followers, and has not swerved from it to the present day. Cubans taken prisoners are butchered on the battle-field, and Americans or foreigners captured in actual or constructive hostility are summarily executed as pirates, in violation of all civilized rules and international law. In January, 1869, the Spanish soldiers inaugurated a reign of terror in Havana, assassinating at theaters, in coffee-houses, and in the streets men, women, and children. In March three hundred persons of the best Cuban families were exiled to the Island of Fernando Po, where more than half of them perished from cruelty and privation. In February, 1870, in Santiago de Cuba, eighteen prominent, rich, aged, and peaceful persons were executed without trial. During the year 1870 it is estimated that ten thousand unarmed and peaceful Cubans were shot by the Spaniards. In January, 1871, Colonel Alvear's Spanish troops murdered the ladies and children of the distinguished Mola family, whom they found on a plantation. In November the military authorities arrested and executed eight boys and condemned others to the chain-gang for the alleged offense of desecrating the grave of Castanon while as medical students they were playing in the cemetery.

The civilized world stood aghast at this incredible inhumanity. Behold the horrid picture, as drawn by Senator Benot in the Spanish Cortes itself:

Most of you, my lords, are fathers. Picture to yourselves in your mind's eye your sons being absent from the university of Havana in consequence of the absence of a professor, going in a spirit of boyish light-heartedness to a neighboring cemetery to play. Imagine for this irreverence, and a certain want of confidence that existed in the authorities, a ferocious and riotous mob taking your sons prisoners, subjecting them to a council of war, accusing them falsely of injuring the tombs. Imagine again the council of war acquitting them, and this savage rabble, worked up to a pitch of paroxysm at human blood being denied it,

subjecting your innocent sons, after they had been acquitted, to another council of war, and there, at the point of the bayonet and under the fears inspired by the howls of these blood-thirsty hyenas, there condemning eight of your sons to death and the rest to the chain-gang! The children numbered forty-four, and the second council of war ordered them to draw lots who should die. Among the others it fell to the lot of two brothers, and the stony hearts of the judges even thinking it hard to deprive a father at one blow of both of his sons pardoned one of them; but in order that the number should remain correct they substituted for the pardoned boy another, because he happened to be somewhat older than the rest, without seeing or caring that they were breaking the heart of another father by murdering his innocent son—so innocent indeed that he had not even been in Havana on the day of the alleged demolition of the tombs. What should you say, O upright senators, who have grown gray in the administration of justice, if one of your sons had been condemned to death and shot like a dog for the fearful crime of being a little older than his unfortunate companions? Would to God that the bitter tale were hidden from all the nations of the earth!

In January, 1872, Captain-General Valnaseda issued a proclamation that every male person found away from his home should be shot, the women if white be put in prison and banished, and if colored to be condemned to the chain-gang for four years. In April Colonel Morales captured a place where twenty-five women, ten children, and six old men were living peacefully, and executed them all. During the year 1872 it is estimated that four thousand unarmed persons were shot by the Spaniards. In November, 1873, the American ship *Virginus*, with one hundred and fifty-six men on board, was captured by the Spaniards. Out of this number four were instantly shot without trial and forty-nine more after a mock trial, and in utter violation of our treaty with Spain, were shot within a little more than one week after their unlawful capture on the high seas. Persons are tried and sentenced to death while absent or out of the country, children are immolated, judgment is passed upon the dead, the innocent suffer for the guilty, human ears are fried and eaten, and the only power is that of brute force in the lawless service of tyranny and plunder.

Here is another scene of barbarity shocking to all Christendom :

SANTIAGO DE CUBA, *November 15, 1873.*

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER: I know you will pardon me for not answering your letter of last April, in which you desire "full information in regard to the massacre of the Grand Lodge of Santiago de Cuba and the present condition of their widows and orphans." When your letter was received it had the appearance of having been opened. This fact and the contents of the letter convinced me that if the reception of the letter by me was known by the governor my life, in spite of my high official position, would not be worth a moment's purchase. I immediately burned the letter, and beyond my usual correspondence on business matters have not thought it advisable to touch on matters and things of our unhappy island, much as I should have desired you to have the horrible facts to present them to the Grand Lodge of New York at their last sitting. But this you know was impossible, as every mail was searched, and life here is held of no value whatever. But the affairs of the last few days and the savage acts of the volunteers have compelled many to leave here secretly, as there is no knowing where this will all end, and by this mode I send this letter, though when it will reach you God only knows.

The Grand Lodge in 1869 met here, as was their custom since their organization. They had never been disturbed by the government, although their time and place of meeting were well known to all of us. The night before the meeting I was informed that the arrest was to be made, and that should there be any resistance on the part of the Tyler to the free entrance of the officers the troops were to fire into the building and burn it, with all those within. I personally informed the Grand Lodge of these intentions, and the next morning learned that they intended to hold their session with open doors. They did so, and were arrested and that night confined in the jail. The next morning they were informed that they should be taken to Havana for trial; but three hours after sunrise they were all taken outside of the city and shot. This act created considerable excitement at the time, but as it was imprisonment to speak of it, it was soon hushed up.

The families of those men thus shot were placed on trial for the act of the heads of those families, and, as a result, their property was confiscated, they were declared, paupers, and at the same time the populace was forbidden, under pain of imprison-

ment, to render any of them any assistance. Thus, being deprived of home and shelter, food and the means of obtaining it, forbidden to leave the jurisdiction of Santiago de Cuba, these poor, helpless creatures sought shelter in the woods near here, and became one common family.

But the inhumanities, cruelties, and barbarities which these women and children have been subjected to passed the belief of a civilized being. I could not describe what I have seen and been unable to prevent. All robberies are laid to their door, and even supposed robberies were gotten up, so that the chase of the blood-hound might be witnessed by the rabble, and the suffering of some one of the poor beings added to their thirst for morbid depravity. It was not two months after the executions that I saw one of the women, who was about to become a mother, placed between two boards, upon which sat a heavy burly savage, surrounded by a dozen soldiers and several officers, who were trying to compel this helpless being to confess a crime of robbery which I had previously investigated, and could find nothing that warranted the belief of a robbery having been committed. Her dead body was left there, and four days after, when the stench compelled its burial, it was found to have been partly devoured by dogs. Since that time to the present these poor creatures have been subjected to outrages beyond description or comprehension by the people of a community such as you live in.

ONLY A FEW LEFT.

There are now but few living, perhaps thirty to forty souls, though in 1869 they numbered in all over three hundred. Some died from starvation, others from exposure, while the majority of them were killed by blood-hounds, for it is one of the sports of these brutes to hunt these poor people as game. I have seen bodies of those thus killed whose sex could not be distinguished by reason of mutilation. An attempt to exterminate them was made a few days ago by the volunteers and some of the crew of the *Tornado*. When the *Virginus* was brought into the harbor it was made the occasion of great festivities, and liquor flowed freely. Toward midnight a party of three men, with hounds to hunt their victims, started for the woods. No one dared to prevent what it was known would follow. The next morning they boasted in the streets of what had taken place, and related with pride and pleasure the violence to which they had subjected these women and girls, some of the latter being only ten years old.

BURYING NINE VICTIMS.

With an associate official we that afternoon proceeded into the woods and ordered the burial of nine whom we found dead. Seven were suffering from violence that I cannot describe; one was black in the face, she having been choked to death, while another had her entire breast bitten off. I returned sick at heart, unable to render the slightest assistance, though I had been compelled to look on with apparent indifference.

By means of negroes we render them what assistance we can. Clothing we cannot send, as this might be identified, but food and medicines we have so far been able safely to send through slaves, who have more pity for these beings than they who once shared the bounty and hospitality of those they now persecute.

I need not ask you to keep my name to yourself. You know where all the proof can be had of this and other matters. I have not gone into the matter in the full detail that the case deserves. If the people in the United States should petition their Government to give the moral influence of some kind of protection, the money could easily be had to either take them out of the country or provide for them without any expense to the community. In God's name do what you can for humanity.

The Secretary of State, in a dispatch to the Spanish minister October 13, 1869, says that the civil war in Cuba has continued for a year; battle after battle has been fought, thousands of lives have been sacrificed, and the result is still in suspense; and the minister is reminded of the frequency with which, in the interest of humanity, he has been obliged to remonstrate against the atrocities and cruelties which have attended the conflict in Cuba for the last year. The principle of neutrality has controlled the proceedings of the Administration, he says, with regard to the war in Cuba; but he cannot admit the indefinite protraction of a conflict such as has existed for the past year in that island, a conflict marked with cruelties, destruction, and devastation without parallel in modern civilized warfare.

The American minister at Madrid reminded the Spanish minister of state that this Government had before remonstrated against certain proclamations of the captain-general of Cuba that threaten a

mode of warfare at variance with the recognized customs of civilized nations; and he protests with all solemnity, in the name of the President of the United States, against the deplorable excesses which have thus far characterized the war in Cuba, and insists in the name of humanity, while hostilities are prolonged, that the war shall be conducted in a manner more in accordance with the humane and Christian sentiments of the age. For nearly a year the insurgents have maintained themselves against all the forces which Spain and the Catalan volunteers have been able to put into the field against them. In the judgment of the President, in which the whole civilized world will coincide, the time has come, he says, when this struggle shall be carried on in a more humane way. To shoot prisoners of war simply because they are taken with arms in their hands is not in accordance with the custom of the Christian world. We have a right on our part to insist that Spain shall carry on this war hereafter in a manner more in accordance with the humane and Christian sentiments of the age. And the Secretary of State, Mr. Fish, in his dispatch of November 12, 1873, to our minister, Mr. Sickles, declares that such wholesale butchery and murder are almost incredible; that it would be wholly incredible but for the bloody and vengeful deeds of which Cuba has been the theater, and that no government deserves to exist which can tolerate such crimes.

The fourth and last preamble of the resolution is as follows:

In consequence of the proximity of the seat of war to the United States the war has been and is injurious to the interests of the people of the United States, and it is evident that a prolongation of the contest will result only in great suffering and bloodshed, to be followed by the ultimate recognition of the independence of Cuba by Spain herself.

The proximity of the Island of Cuba to our own country, commanding as it does the approach to the Gulf of Mexico and barring the entrance to the Mississippi River, which drains half of the North American continent and is the great highway of commerce of the Western States of this Union, forces the question of its condition and destiny upon our most serious consideration and invests this question with interests peculiarly American.

This island keeps watch at the door-way of all our Mississippi, Gulf, California, and South American commerce, and nature and necessity will ever demand that it shall be the friend and ally of the United States, and its enemy never.

The prolonged war in this important and neighboring island has been and is injurious to the interests of the people of the United States, and its indefinite prolongation, with all its destruction of productive industries, its horrors and barbarities, must be firmly discountenanced, for the potent voices of humanity and commerce demand it. What greater agencies controlling the destiny of nations than the Christian sentiments born of a common humanity, and the interests of trade which marshals the money of the world? Under the present war of extermination and ruin, as it draws its bloody length along from year to year, with neither conquest on the one side nor independence on the other, no nearer success than five years ago, American citizens are suffering in life and property, and the treaty obligations to this country are violated with daily defiance and thus far with impunity. We desire no hostile attitude between the United States and Spain, and only from a sincere regard for the mutual interests of peace do we desire a speedy termination of hostilities in this unhappy island, and in the light of the past experience and the unconquerable difficulties in the future it would seem that the Spanish Cortes itself must see that this

war can only be a fearful waste of blood and treasure for a time, to end at last with exhaustion and the expulsion of its flag from this Gem of the Antilles.

Torn by civil war and contending armies, with no established form of government or fixed rule at home, how can Spain have any reasonable hope to subdue this revolution in Cuba? Can it be expected that the republican governments in this hemisphere will have more regard for the pride of a decayed monarchy or an insincere and insecure republican dictatorship in Europe than for their own sense of justice and political and commercial interests?

All nations steer their policy by the compass of national interest. European diplomacy is nothing but a network of self-interest, frequently torn by mighty wars but quickly repaired by the oft-renewed treaty, and thus treaties, intrigues, and wars hold their perpetual successions like the rotations of the seasons. Our hemisphere has no such network of international dangers. With a simplicity and uniformity of government in every portion of it, and entangling alliances with no European systems, our national existence may ever be characterized by the successful study and fruition of the highest happiness attainable by the science of government.

But can the United States be indifferent to an indefinite protraction of this contest in Cuba? Has its continuance for five years been injurious to the interests of the United States? In the statesmanship of every country two questions are always prominent, and cannot be exceeded by any other considerations, that of national safety and national revenue. The preservation of our institutions, and the extension and protection of our trade are the vital organs in the body of our country's welfare itself, and these being more directly under the guardianship of the representatives of the people demand our first solicitude and maturest reflection.

The interests of a country consist not alone in the profits of business, and the collection and disbursement of its revenues, but also in the contentment of its people, in the uncompromising protection of their rights abroad, in the undoubted power and disposition of its government, and in the respect and inviolability of its flag upon all the waters of the globe.

All of these interests of the United States have suffered most injuriously, and must continue to until the conclusion of this mad contest in the very pathway of our commerce and on the very threshold of our bordering sea of the south.

The danger confronting us is an outburst of hostility at any moment between the United States and Spain, and all on account of complications arising out of the present condition of Cuba and our inseparable relations with that island. To avert this danger, which is not appalling to our power, only discordant to our cherished policy of peace, the early tranquillity of this island is a question for our serious contemplation. As lovers of our country we will at least not hesitate to initiate the process of pacification, or, better still, the peaceful process of independence in Cuba before we ourselves are drawn unwillingly into the vortex of war. But shall this pacification be secured by the defeat of liberty or the expulsion of despotism; by the triumph of the patriot or the victory of the ineffable tyrant?

Our obligations of amity and treaty have ever been scrupulously observed toward Spain through every administration of the Government to the present. Spanish citizens have not been molested nor their property disturbed; but so freely have they mingled in the enjoyments and rights of our institutions that their distinct presence has

not even attracted our attention. If any complaint could be made it could only be at the excessive regard generally shown to the side of the Spaniard at the expense of our own citizens. So intence has always been our desire for amity and peace that in all differences between our citizens and the government of Spain since 1850, she received invariably the benefit of our indifference or our silent discrimination in her favor.

Charity flows from liberality, and magnanimity from strength, but there are moments in the life of nations as well as in individuals when charitable virtue must cease, and the preservation of vital interests can be no longer deferred. This I solemnly believe is the decisive moment in our relations with the Spanish government in the Island of Cuba, when we should act in a spirit of no unkindness but firmness and fidelity for the security of our own safety and commercial interests. This constant war and irritation in Cuba unfits the captain-general and his myrmidons from the calm consideration of all questions relating to the United States. Irresponsible as is this military despot, he suddenly aggresses upon our rights, violates our treaties, assassinates our citizens, and then pleads his want of power for reparation, and serenely refers the nations demanding redress to another hemisphere, to a disrupted government that may or may not at the time have a temporary head at Madrid. The captain-general has unlimited power for good or evil, but none for restitution, and the answer to all just complaints from the home government are only the repetition of excuses rendered by inferior officials to their superiors.

It ever has been, on the part of Spain, a disregard of justice to all friendly nations, to provide her representative in Cuba with such extraordinary powers, and in case of injuries to make no provision for prompt redress.

In 1851 nearly four hundred American citizens landed upon the shores of Cuba under the leadership of Lopez to assist the oppressed Cubans in an uprising for liberty. Their unfortunate fate is well known, having been captured and summarily executed. General Crittenden with a number of his companions was also about the same time captured—not as soldiers, but unarmed—on the Island of Contoy, belonging to Mexico, and after a mock trial before a military tribunal were basely murdered; and the gallant Crittenden, when ordered by the Spanish executioner to kneel down, exclaimed with indignation, "I kneel to none but my God."

Following close upon these outrages two American vessels, the Susan Loud and the Georgiana, were seized upon by the Spanish authorities while lying off the coast of Yucatan, and the officers and crew subjected to the most ignominious and inhuman treatment upon the suspicion that they were concerned in the Lopez expedition. Next, the Falcon, a United States mail steamer, was fired into by a Spanish vessel without even a specious pretext. United States mailbags were next forced open by the Spanish authorities, the mail overhauled and examined for the avowed purpose of preventing the reception and transmission of any communication or news except only such as the captain-general should deem proper. About the same time the United States steamer Crescent City was refused a landing at Havana with her passengers and mails because the purser of the boat was obnoxious to the Spanish authorities, by which act our postal and commercial arrangements were interrupted and our private citizens deeply injured. The United States Steamer Black Warrior was next fired upon by a Spanish war steamer, the vessel siezed, and the property of our citizens for a time confiscated.

In this way from time to time has our flag been insulted and our confidence and friendship abused by a weak Spanish neighbor toward whom we were ever just and indulgent in all our intercourse.

The consul-general at Santiago de Cuba informed the Secretary of State in June, 1869, that three American citizens were publicly shot without trial, having been taken prisoners at Ramon.

Speakman, a native of Pennsylvania, a perfectly innocent man, was cruelly murdered after the formality of a trial that amounted only to a farce. Mr. Cohner, the well-known American artist, was assassinated in the streets of Havana, in 1869, only in pursuance of that Spanish *habit* of insulting, plundering, and killing our citizens. The brutal butchery of Greenwald, because he was thought to be an American, and the treatment his dead body received, as well as the attempted assassination of other American citizens who were his companions, are yet well remembered by the country. In March, 1869, the American brig Mary Lowell was captured and condemned as a Spanish prize. This act was more in contravention of international law than even the seizure of the *Virginius*.

More recently the American steamer *Aspinwall* was seized by a Spanish war vessel on the high seas upon the suspicion that she had arms and ammunition for the Cubans. She had no contraband goods on board, and was accordingly released after having been taken to Havana; but no reparation has yet been made, in answer to the demands of this Government, for the wrong done to our commerce and the national flag.

And more recently the capture of the steamer *Virginius*, on the high seas, carrying American papers and the American flag as evidence of her nationality, by the Spanish war steamer *Tornado*, and the hasty murder of fifty-three of her passengers and crew for no crime actually committed or known to international law, is still fresh in the minds of the people, and needs but this allusion at my hands.

But a few months ago a prominent citizen of my own State set foot on the Island of Cuba in pursuit of his legal business, having been employed to attend to some embargoed interests belonging to his countrymen. Crossing through the island from Havana he reported himself at the office of the American consular agent at Nuevitas; whereupon both he and our agent were arrested by the Spanish governor, although the agent was subsequently released. But the undignified treatment of American official representatives in Cuba is not an unusual thing.

Only two years ago the American vice-consul at Santiago was compelled to seek safety from personal violence by seeking refuge on board of a French frigate, and the American consul-general at Havana received about the same time from the British naval officers the assurance of their protection and the offer of a file of marines to protect him whenever it became necessary to seek his safety on board a British man-of-war. A state of affairs in which such outrages can possibly occur is indeed but a smoldering magazine from which the explosion of war may come upon us at any hour in the day.

This maltreatment of our consuls and inhuman murder of our citizens is not only a wanton indignity to our Government, but is wholly in willful violation of the most solemn treaty stipulations.

Article 8 of the treaty of 1795 with Spain is as follows:

And in all cases of seizure, detention, or arrest for debts contracted, or offenses committed by any citizen or subject of the one party within the jurisdiction of the other, the same shall be made and prosecuted by order and authority of law only, and according to the regular course of proceedings usual in such cases. The citizens and subjects of both parties shall be allowed to employ such advocates, solicitors, notaries, agents, and factors as they may judge proper in all their affairs, and

in all their trials at law in which they may be concerned before the tribunals of the other party; and such agents shall have free access to be present at the proceedings in such cases, and at the taking of all examination and evidence which may be exhibited at the said trials.

No language could be clearer or more comprehensive:

In all cases of offenses committed by any citizen within the jurisdiction of the other, the same shall be prosecuted by authority of law only, and according to the regular course of proceedings usual in such cases.

Need I say that our countrymen so ruthlessly slain in Cuba were for the most part captured on the high seas, without arms in their hands, and outside of the limits of Spanish jurisdiction; and when carried on land often no trial was had, no charges were preferred; while at others no examination or evidence was had, and the condemned were never permitted even to see the unusual and extraordinary tribunals that passed judgment upon them. In this way has American blood been wantonly shed in contempt of our flag and in foul treachery to the requirements of a mutual treaty.

To-day the fate of F. A. Dockray, an able, accomplished, and gallant citizen of my State, who was arrested at Nuevitas, is still undecided, one military tribunal having condemned him in violation of the safeguards of the treaty, though through the energetic interposition of our Government he will be accorded another trial, which I pray may result in his acquittal, for the prayers of a stricken father and agonizing mother are ascending hourly to Heaven for the preservation of their only child to comfort them in their old age.

Sir, it is not in human foresight to see how long this country and Spain can maintain peaceful relations with such a train of outrageous occurrences passing between them. It calls for the wisdom of both nations to devise a speedy remedy for a mutual extrication from this threatening dilemma. Our remedy lies in the passage of this resolution.

Wisdom and forbearance can devise nothing better. To this complexion it must come at last, and it were better that the American Congress now rise in moral grandeur and determination equal to the exigency, rather than that the coming year shall see another hecatomb of our citizens slaughtered in cold blood, shall behold our commerce crippled and our flag still more disgraced, only to be confronted at the next session by an inexorable necessity to take this very step.

Our commercial interests must suffer great injury by the indefinite continuation of this struggle in Cuba. Liberty and commerce preserve the life of the nation, as freedom and circulation the healthy life of the individual.

The best evidence of the progress of a nation is to be seen in the steady extension of its commerce, and its first signs of decadence in its shrinkage.

The commercial pursuits of this country have been steadily progressing, as seen by our gradual increase of American tonnage from 1,368,127 tons in 1815 to 5,353,868 tons in 1860, while during the war, for obvious causes, our tonnage decreased; but since the close of the rebellion we are again in the line of recovering our former proportion. Our foreign commerce has always been on the increase, and the loss of national tonnage did not retard the constantly increasing value of our exports and imports. In 1850 the value of this commerce was \$330,037,038; in 1860, \$762,288,550; and in 1873, over \$1,300,594,864. With the exception of Great Britain the most important and valuable of our commercial exchanges is with the inexhaustible island of Cuba.

Our trade for 1873, excepting again Great Britain, with seven of

the principal commercial countries; as rated by their exchange of products with the United States, represents their relative importance as follows:

China.....	\$28,267,023
Japan.....	16,917,432
Italy.....	15,215,639
Spain.....	15,019,155
Russia.....	13,976,545
Austria.....	2,390,014
Total.....	91,785,808
Cuban trade.....	107,500,000

In a commercial point of view then our trade with Cuba alone is \$5,714,192 greater than that of the six other of our best customers combined.

The following official table serves to show to what extent our shipping is engaged in the carrying trade of Cuba—more than double that of Spain, and more than fourfold that of England and France:

Entrance and clearance of vessels in the ports of Cuba during 1847.

Countries.	Entrance.	Clearance.
United States.....	2,012	1,722
Spain.....	819	751
England.....	563	489
France.....	99	81

The United States imported from Cuba in 1873 1,454,124,259 pounds of raw sugar, valued at \$77,953,470; also 43,533,909 gallons of molasses, valued at \$9,901,051; also 113,670,829 pounds of melada valued at \$4,722,165; total, \$92,500,000; and imported from all the rest of the world \$19,072,920 of sugar and molasses. American ships alone carried 795,000 tons of this freight, and at the usual rate of five dollars per ton our shipping earned nearly \$4,000,000 in the transportation of this one product of traffic between these two countries.

In 1873 the United States exports to Cuba amounted to more than \$15,000,000, and estimating the inhabitants at about 1,200,000, the rate was over twelve dollars to each one of her population.

Our exports to Germany with its 45,000,000 of people were \$61,767,997, or at the rate of one dollar and thirty-eight cents per head, and to France with her 38,000,000 of people our exports amounted to \$33,000,000, or at the rate of less than one dollar per head.

The magnitude of our trade with Cuba may have escaped attention in our more eager gaze at the brilliant enterprise of bringing the fabulous wealth of the Orient through the golden gates of San Francisco, and yet the figures prove that our traffic with this island is more than twice as valuable as that of China and Japan combined.

Other nations, as wise and enlightened as we are, do not scruple to engage in war for no other purpose than really to open new avenues for commerce and to drain the source of new riches into their national coffers, and yet the United States Government hesitates to extend even the hand of moral fellowship to a people who individually are of more importance to this country in a commercial calculation than either the Chinese, Spanish, Germans, or French combined.

The English embark in war in Asia to compel an unwilling people to become opium-eaters for the benefits of the English treasury, and yet we, who are no better Christians, and not half as good political

economists as our cousins across the Atlantic, shrink from speaking one word of recognition and encouragement to a brave people from whom we receive three-fourths of that indispensable article, sugar, consumed in this country, and who are self-sacrificing devotees to our own republican form of government.

Shall this Government stand by in stoic unconcern and witness the sure and gradual destruction of its important and essential commercial interests in Cuba, or shall we pass this resolution, a simple, peaceful act in itself, usual and rightful between nations, without cause for offense on the part of Spain, but which act will become an event, and will herald the not distant independence of Cuba as the stimulating sunshine of spring heralds the glorious harvest of the summer?

Our peace and vital interests require protection, but not by interference. The simple passage of this resolution will hedge our interests with all the potency they require, and develop others to a greatness unthought of before. Our policy is peace and protection. What the course of the British government would be under the like circumstances now surrounding us may be easily inferred from their position held in 1821, and announced to the allied powers of Europe. They said no government was more prepared than their own to uphold the right of any state or states to interfere where their own security or essential interests were seriously endangered by the internal transactions of another state.

Again, it can easily be demonstrated that it is not among the possibilities of Spain, with all her superiority of arms and discipline and navy, to crush this spirit of independence in Cuba, or to subdue the present military opposition to her authority.

The decrepitude and instability of Spain herself is the strongest proof in support of this assertion. With imperialism and democracy at war in the mother-country, and all probabilities so uncertain even that no reasonable prediction can be ventured upon the issue, where are the material and strength to come from for the ultimate subjugation of this heroic people? Ultimate even, for time brings legions and strength to the Cuban and weakness to the Spaniard.

Said Señor Garrido in the Cortes over a year ago:

The Cubans have the same right to administer their island as we have to govern and administer our provinces and local interests. Against tyranny there is always the right of rebellion, and we who for fifty years were always rising against despotism cannot deny the right of rising to those whom we ourselves oppress. You say you want twelve thousand more men to crush the Cuban insurrection; but this insurrection has already existed four years, and now you come and tell us that you want twelve thousand men to subdue it, besides the fifty thousand or more that you have sent already. I can tell you that the question of Cuba is for you an insoluble one; you may send your twelve thousand men there as you have sent many times twelve thousand already during the last four years, but you will not settle the question for all that.

Said Senor Eduardo Benot, in the Spanish senate:

We have lost in the Antilles thousands and thousands of brave soldiers: Cuba is the tomb of the Spanish youth, the grave of the Spanish army. What have we gained after all by wresting from the Cubans their inborn rights which, try as we may, must still be theirs? We have won the right of being held up as the most inhuman people in all civilization.

In 1869 General Prim stated to the Cortes that Spain had sent 34,500 men to re-enforce the army and navy in Cuba, and the whole Spanish forces employed in Cuba since the commencement of the revolution number over 107,400, from their own estimates. The Cubans commenced with a body of 147 armed men, and to-day have 17,250 well-armed men under an able and successful commander-in-

chief, General Maximo Gomez, 3,000 of whom are an efficient and formidable cavalry, whom the Spanish soldiers describe as "men on horseback, without guns, fighting like devils."

In 1870, when the revolution was weaker than to-day, and when Spain had an established government and peace at home, Mr. Sickles, our minister at Madrid, informed our Government that the Spanish campaign in Cuba had failed, and that their great reliance was then on the thirty gun-boats lately built for Spain in the United States.

What has become of these 107,400 Spanish troops? The captain-general in his official report of 1869 accounts for 14,000 as having been lost by disease and battle during that year. In the absence of further official reports from this military functionary upon the subject, it may not be unreasonable to conclude that 14,000 at least followed each year in the same wake, which for the years 1870, 1871, 1872, and 1873 would amount to 56,000 more as mustered out by battle and disease.

When is it possible for Spain, disrupted in government and dishonored in credit, to send out 107,400 soldiers more for the conquest of disease and the patriots? Will it be when Don Carlos and Marshal Serrano shall meet in armistice and each contribute his quota of troops for the expedition?

Captain-General Jovellar lately resigned his position as governor of the Island, being convinced that Spain cannot now, and I assert never can, furnish the requisite men and money to maintain her sovereignty in Cuba.

Sir, a people whose cause is just, once baptized in the blood of liberty, are ever invincible, and tyrants from all ages and nations can bear unwilling testimony to this truth. For seven years our fathers persevered amid the varying fortunes of war for the boon of liberty we, their descendants, now enjoy, and who will say that the devotion to independence is less intense in Cuba than it was in our Colonies, with all their superadded suffering and political degradation to nerve them on to victory or death?

It is not in Spanish power to again enslave this people, six hundred thousand white and six hundred thousand colored, who fight with such persistent desperation, whose commissary is the bountiful fruitage of a tropical clime, who have such inapproachable fastnesses for safe retreat and as a constant basis for renewing operations, and whose faithful ally in the destruction of their unacclimated enemies is that fearful scourge of the tropics, the yellow-fever.

The future of poor Cuba may yet be darkened for years with more blood and anarchy, which merciful Heaven forbid! but the final blessing upon all this martyrdom must come at last as certain as that immutable justice is an attribute of God.

Sir, the natural right of revolution is recognized by all international jurisprudence, and no cause for revolt more just than that of Cuba stands recorded in the annals of the world. If there ever was an occasion that justified a revolution, that called upon a people to recur to first principles and seek relief from the abuse of power by an appeal to arms, this was one. The spirit of resistance was not evoked by any question of abstract rights, but from actual suffering and grievous oppression in the administration of justice, in agriculture, in commerce, and in every pursuit of happiness.

Wars were formerly fought for families and dynasties, for the rights of thrones and the prerogatives of crowns; now men fight for written constitutions, for the rights of men and the prerogatives of nations, and fighting learn to govern for themselves.

Shall this brave people of both races who for nearly six years have been fighting for the creation of a new nation, and who in their final triumph will cease to be Spaniards as well as slaves, continue yet another year without one word of sympathy from us, simply because we brook the spontaneous expressions of our own hearts and judgments in most unnatural deference to the opinions of European monarchies?

The very fact that such powers are the enemies of liberty everywhere is the very reason why our great nation should be its friend. Monarchies are always swift in the recognition of new governments in political affinity with their own, regardless of the question of their birth, whether by statecraft, as Amadeus of Spain, by usurpation as Napoleon III of France, or by invasion and attempted conquest of a sister republic as Maximilian in Mexico. Shall we, from fear of European criticism or for want of moral stamina in the exercise of our prerogative, turn a deaf ear for another year to the crying appeals of liberty in Cuba, or shall we rather, imbued as I knew we are, express the same noble sentiments as uttered by the Father of his Country on the presentation of the French flag to our Government in 1796:

Born in a land of liberty, my anxious recollection, my sympathetic feelings, and my best wishes are irresistibly excited, whensoever, in any country, I see an oppressed nation unfurl the banners of freedom.

Why hesitate in this act of justice to a struggling nation who for six years have been fighting for their own liberty and for the freedom of over a quarter of a million slaves?

Who doubts that if France or Prussia or Holland had treated our revolutionary fathers with the same indifference and delay in the acknowledgment of their independence as the Congress of the United States has shown toward Cuba that George Washington and his illustrious compeers would have died ignominiously as traitors upon the scaffold, and their marble statues that now honor this Capitol would be miledown blocks in the quarry and their monuments, like that of the adored Emmet, would yet be muscled and unepitaphed?

Benjamin Franklin, declining to receive back a sum of money which he had loaned to a poor and worthy man, upon tender of its payment exclaimed, "I do not need; it pass it round among other poor and worthy people who are in distress."

What was our condition and prospect of success before the sun of foreign recognition rose above the horizon of our Colonies? Says Hildreth, the historian:

November, 1776.—Washington's army was by this time greatly reduced. The term of service of the militia was fast expiring. The whole flying camp soon claimed their discharge, and no inducement could procure a moment's delay. Some of the New York militia refused to do duty. Howe, they said, offered peace, liberty, and safety; so they understood his proclamation, and what more could be asked? The Continentals were enlisting for a year, and their term of service was fast drawing to a close; nor did they always wait to complete it, desertions being very numerous. Exclusive of the divisions of the highlands, and the corps under Lee on the east side of the Hudson, Washington's army did not exceed four thousand men.

In December Washington made the memorable retreat across the Delaware, while the principal cities of the country were one after the other falling into the hands of the enemy; and at the expiration of the year the same historian describes the following situation:

The Howes issued a new proclamation. The speedy triumph of the mother-country seemed certain, and many persons, those especially of large property, including several who had taken an active part in the Revolution, hastened to make the required submission.

Turkey, president of the late New Jersey convention, which had sanctioned the Declaration of Independence and formed the State constitution, now abandoned his country's cause and took a British protection. So did Allen and Galloway, late delegates from Pennsylvania to the Continental Congress. For ten days after the issue of the proclamation two or three hundred persons came in every day to take the oath.

At this critical juncture in our liberty's history the opportune recognition and friendship of France alone saved us from disintegration, defeat, and the ignominy of death on the scaffold.

Pass the blessing of liberty round through the hemispheres and the islands, wherever a gallant and worthy people strike and ask for it. Liberty sped from France to our shores upon the wings of their recognition of our independence. Let us speed liberty to Cuba upon the wings of the passage of this resolution, and the stars that this night keep watch over that bleeding island will sing the song of salvation in the morning, as the morning stars sang together over the birth of a Saviour at Bethlehem.

We, as a nation, are the beneficiaries of Providence, as was he to Franklin, who received a valuable favor at his hands. To have pocketed the money and been indifferent to worthy and distressed neighbors, would have stamped him with the moral crimes of theft and ingratitude.

To enjoy our freedom in arrogance and be indifferent to the distressed republic of Cuba, when by this simple recognition of their independence we could bless them as France and the other nations blessed us, would it not be undeservedly stamping this country as guilty of baseness and ingratitude without parallel in the annals of the Christian world?

No American colony ever achieved its independence without the friendly assistance of other nations.

Greece received material aid in armies and ships, even more than the simple recognition that Cuba pleads for, from the allied powers in Europe against Turkey. And this interference, not recognition only, is justified by our most authoritative commentators upon international law.

The assistance that England gave to the United Netherlands when they were struggling against Spain, and the assistance France gave to this country during the war of our Revolution, were justifiable acts, founded in wisdom and policy. And equally justifiable was the interference of the European powers of France, Great Britain, and Russia, in favor of the Greeks against the Ottoman Porte, by the treaty for the pacification of Greece concluded by these three Christian powers in 1827, and by means of which a ferocious and destructive war was terminated by the independence of the Greek state as a new kingdom, and a recognition of that independence by the Ottoman Porte in 1832. So, also, there was a successful interference in 1840 of four of the European powers, Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia, in the civil war between the Ottoman Porte and Mehemet Ali, the Pasha of Egypt. And lastly, there was the memorable interference of the five great European powers in the Belgic revolution of 1830, which ended in the separation of Belgium from Holland, and the establishment of the same as an independent state.—*Kent's Commentaries*, volume 2, page 23.

The South American Spanish colonies for years before their independence was even recognized by Congress, received such assistance from the United States as was obtainable under the following instructions issued by President Madison on the 3d of July, 1815.

Cuba will be content with the same assistance and her independence would be assured under similar presidential instructions at this time, though I believe it is the imperative duty of Congress to accept the responsibility of this question and to inaugurate a new policy in our relations with Cuba which the Executive of the Gov-

ernment would faithfully carry out as the expression of the will of the people :

There is no principle of the law of nations which requires us to exclude from our ports the subjects of a foreign power in a state of insurrection against their own government. It is not incumbent upon us to take notice of crimes and offenses which are committed against the municipal laws of another country, whether they are classed in the highest grade of treason or in the lowest grade of misdemeanor. Piracy is an offense against the law of nations, and every civilized government undertakes to punish the pirate when brought within its jurisdiction ; but an act of revolt, a rebellion against a sovereign, must not be confounded with an act of piracy, which is denominated hostility against the human race.

Any merchant vessel, therefore, which has not committed an offense against the law of nations, being freighted with a lawful cargo and conforming in all respects to the laws of the United States, is entitled to an entry at our custom-houses, whatever flag she may bear. She is also entitled to take on board a return cargo and to depart from the United States with the usual clearance.

The President desires that you will regulate your official conduct upon the principles that have been stated ; but if any extraordinary case occurs, you will report it to this Department with all possible dispatch.

I am, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

A. J. DALLAS,
Secretary of the Treasury.

P. L. B. DUPLESSIS, Esq.,
Collector, New Orleans.

It may be asked what benefit will the passage of this resolution be to our struggling political brothers in Cuba, and wherein is their independence so surely to follow ? Sir, ever since this struggle our country has been in the unmanly attitude of holding the Cuban down while the Spaniard is fighting him. We have long felt the meanness and unmanliness of our false position ; but they say it is our treaty obligation to Spain that compels us to violate our conscience by opening our doors and stores to the Spanish slave-holder, while to the poor slave and the Cuban we must sell or give nothing, not even a cup of cold water or kind expression of sympathy. Shameful attitude in the eyes of our own self-respect ! How must we, the giant and paternal republic of the New World, appear in the estimation of the weak but chivalrous republics of Mexico and South America, who long ago recognized the belligerent rights of the infant republic of Cuba ?

Spain has all the privileges of trade and facilities in the ports of the United States, replenishes her war stores, and repairs her ships of war in American ports whenever necessity may demand ; and with her thirty gun-boats, built but a few years ago for her in the United States, she has indeed every advantage, except in valor on an equal battle-field, over the Cubans, who are not allowed by the guardians of the law and the treaty to receive any instruments of warfare, either by purchase or contribution, from liberty-loving friends and sympathizers.

But the most ridiculous posture in which diplomacy has placed us is, that while we are stooping over to hold the poor Cuban on his back, and all in zealous and delicate fulfillment of the treaty, the haughty captain-general kicks us in the back, while his Catalan volunteer sticks a knife between our shoulder, and then blusteringly refers us to Madrid for apology or redress ; and to Madrid we go only to find a government that stands more in awe of the captain-general than he does of it.

Under such humiliating circumstances what American does not admire the Roman spirit of that grand old Senator, Thomas H. Benton, who on the floor of the American Senate, in a debate upon the resolution for liberty in the Spanish South American provinces, said :

In such a case I declare it to be my sentiment that treaties are nothing, books are nothing, laws are nothing ; that the paramount law of God and nature is every-

thing; and that the American soldier, hearing the cry of helplessness and weakness, and remembering only that he was a man born of woman and the father of children, should fly to the rescue, and strike to prevent the further perpetration of crimes that shock humanity and dishonor the age!

With the passage of this resolution will come the proclamation of equal privileges and advantages in all ports and places within the United States. Impartial neutrality will then be observed by our Government between the Cuban and the Spanish belligerents, and equal liberties to pursue the operations of war and purchase military stores will be accorded to both parties. With this recognition will also follow an observance of the rules of civilized warfare on the part of Spain, and her now unchecked barbarities would cease, or interference would be justifiable on the part of enlightened nations as in the case of Greece in her war of independence against Turkey.

This would be placing the oppressor and the oppressed upon an equal footing, and nerved by love of liberty and valor, and cheered by the certainty of fair play, how long would it be before the prowess of the Cubans and the hosts of their friends who would spring out of the earth like the mailed warriors that sprang from the sowing of the dragon's teeth would plant the flag of victory over every rood of that glorious island.

Did not Mr. Webster, the ablest lawyer and most learned diplomatist, as Secretary of State, declare to the British minister, Mr. Fox, in 1841, as follows:

It is well known to Mr. Fox that authorities of the highest eminence in England, living and dead, have maintained that the general law of nations does not forbid the citizens or subjects of one government from taking part in the civil commotions of another.

But I am done. Whatever our action may be upon this resolution, while its passage would be like the outburst of the sun upon the mariner laboring for safety in a mighty storm, nevertheless the failure of its passage will not put out a single camp-fire of liberty on that devoted island. God and the American people will still keep watch over it, until the fullness of time shall bring it triumphantly into the family of nations. I believe this glorious time is not far distant, for the mills of the gods have ground slowly but surely for six years, and the upper and the nether mill stone will soon come together.

Under no possible contingency, without involving the interests and safety of the United States in constant jeopardy, can our Government much longer subordinate its sympathy and recognition of independence to the haughty behests of diplomacy, for the impulses of political and human nature toward this kindred people in Cuba are stronger than the webs of heartless diplomacy, and American patriotism stands ready to enthusiastically assume the responsibility.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 015 999 795 9

